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ZONE OF PEACE AND COOPERATION OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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NIGERIA

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1. The United Nations General Assembly's solemn declaration of the "zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic" in resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986 constituted a historic landmark in multilateral initiatives to promote regional peace and international security. Five years after the zone came into being, its vision as a dynamic instrument of cooperation between the African and Latin American countries on both sides of the South Atlantic in political, economic, scientific, technical, cultural and other spheres is daily gaining increasing momentum. As a ready, functioning vehicle for South-South cooperation, its potential for accelerating the progressive development of the South Atlantic region has been manifested in various ways. There is growing knowledge among Member States about the abundant resources of the zone, while concrete achievements are being recorded in enhanced political contacts, socio-economic relations, commercial transactions, intensive cooperation in environmental protection, harmonization of national policies on maritime questions and cultural exchanges, among others. New vistas of cooperation and opportunities are opening up by the day in other areas unimagined in 1986.

2. In historical perspectives, the creation of the zone in 1986 was a culmination of various initiatives by the States of the zone, dating back to 1976, when the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs organized a seminar, which recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria work towards the emergence of a South Atlantic zone to protect and promote the interests and aspirations of African and Latin American countries on both sides of the ocean. This recommendation was clearly influenced by the events in Angola at the time, as well as concerns for apartheid South Africa's military and geo-political designs on and illegal occupation of Namibia and southern Angola, the extension of the super-Powers' military competition into the South Atlantic region, reflected in the establishment of military bases with their negative consequences for the security of the States of the region, and the desire to straddle the centuries-old colonially inspired divide between the African and Latin American States bordering the South Atlantic ocean by instituting a new era of contact, cooperation and development. The pivotal role played by Nigeria and Brazil in canvassing these initiatives, which finally saw the materialization of the zone in 1986, thus could not have come as a surprise.

3. The first high-level official meeting of the States of the zone, held at Rio de Janeiro from 25 to 29 July 1988, set the stage for meaningful agreements and measures to identify common interests, intensify dialogue, promote cooperation and erect a solid foundation for the zone. The Final Document of the meeting, contained in document A/43/512, highlighted the common objective of cooperation for peace and development in an environment free from tension and in conformity with international law, constructive

relations based on dialogue, understanding mutual interest and respect for the sovereign equality of all States, to the benefit of the peoples of the region and the international community as a whole. Topical issues covered by the meeting included the foreign attempts at the destabilization of Angola, the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa and its apartheid policies against the majority black population in South Africa itself, the Malvinas question, the dumping of radioactive wastes in the region and the question of the attainment of the objectives of the denuclearization of Africa and Latin America, all of which showed the dynamism of the zone in living up to the aspirations of the States of the zone. Important areas of regional cooperation agreed upon then continue to form the bedrock of contacts at the levels of Governments and peoples within the zone.

4. Nigeria is pleased to note that since 1988, significant transformations have taken place at the international and zonal levels, which have accelerated the implementation of the objectives of the zone. Among others, the elimination of East-West tension, the end of the cold war and entente between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have led to the gradual relaxation of military competition in the South Atlantic region. In the political sphere, Namibia attained independence under the United Nations in March 1990, while the combination of domestic uprising and international pressure are forcing the apartheid regime in South Africa to abandon its apartheid policies and begin embarking on the processes that would herald a non-racial, democratic society. The civil war in Angola has formally ended, and a United Nations verification mission has been set up to keep the peace and assist the process towards multi-party democracy. The civil war in Liberia, in spite of its obvious national catastrophe, has remained a localized affair which the Economic Community of West African States has been able to grapple with under its peace-keeping force, the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), without the intervention of extra-regional powerful forces. Finally, there has been considerable improvement in relations between Argentina and the United Kingdom, which makes the prospects for a just, peaceful resolution of the Malvinas Islands situation more promising than before.

5. On other issues, the dumping of radioactive and hazardous wastes in the region by foreign waste merchants, which became very rampant in 1987 and 1988, has now practically stopped, thanks to the determined efforts of the States of the zone, which established a Dump-Watch mechanism during the 1988 Rio de Janeiro meeting to coordinate and monitor their national efforts for the prohibition of such nefarious activities. The backing of the zone for Nigeria in having the issue of the dumping of nuclear and industrial wastes in Africa included in the agenda of the forty-third session of the General Assembly enabled the matter to enjoy popular multilateral support through two resolutions - resolutions 43/75 Q and T of 7 December 1988 - which called for the total prohibition of such dumping. These resolutions have greatly contributed to the stoppage of such practices within the marine and coastal environments of the zone in the past two years.

6. In short, the States of the zone have been making significant strides and recording progress in the spheres of the peaceful resolution of regional or intra-State conflicts, promoting cooperation and development, enlarging frontiers of freedom and human rights and safeguarding the environment from pollution in States of the zone. These are positive contributions to the fulfilment of the objectives of resolution 41/11 and the 1988 Final Document.

7. The second meeting of the States of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, which took place at Abuja, Nigeria, from 25 to 29 June 1990, naturally benefited from the favourable international political developments, the simultaneous improved regional climate and the foundations of constructive cooperation and fruitful understanding laid at Rio de Janeiro two years earlier.

8. The various discussions and outcome of the meeting made it an epoch-making event in the conscious and determined efforts of the States of the zone to promote peace and regional cooperation, as well as lay the foundations for peace and development in the years ahead. While reiterating the principles and guidelines reached in 1988, the Abuja meeting took concrete steps towards translating them into practical action and thus lay the basis for lasting peace and progress in the South Atlantic region.

9. The Final Document of the Abuja meeting, contained in the General Assembly document A/45/474, speaks for itself in its great depth and vision. The highlights included the admission of Namibia as the twenty-third State of the zone and the call for the international community to recognize the unresolved issue of South Africa relinquishing Walvis Bay as an integral part of Namibia, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the legitimate aspirations of the Namibian people. Calls were also made for the cessation of foreign interference in the internal affairs of Angola, a development that has now led to the Angolans reaching a peaceful solution to their long-drawn civil war, as well as the removal of serious obstacles hindering the termination of the existing colonial situation in the Malvinas Islands.

10. Important agreements were equally reached in political, security, commercial, financial, scientific, technical, environmental and cultural fields, with the aim of establishing joint mechanisms, coordinating policies, sharing information, promoting contacts and enhancing cooperation in these important areas, as appropriate. The Abuja meeting considered the zone as a platform for South-South cooperation, and associated States of the zone fully with the decisions taken at the summit of the Group of 15 meeting, held at Kuala Lumpur from 1 to 3 June 1990. Cognizant of global concerns with environmental protection, the meeting recognized the importance for the South Atlantic environment of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled to take place in Brazil in 1992. Finally, determined to ensure that the zone remains continually relevant to the interests of its member States, and the aspirations of the peoples of the zone generally, the Abuja meeting reaffirmed the desire to foster human rights, fundamental freedoms, racial equality, justice and liberty as integral elements of peace and cooperation at national and regional levels.

11. Nigeria, host of the second meeting, was entrusted with the task of coordinating the affairs of the zone from June 1990 till 1992. Such coordination has become necessary in view of varying degrees of political, economic and social development of the 23 States of the zone and the common desire to overcome the serious impediments to the realization of the full potentials for sustainable cooperation, integration and accelerated development envisaged under the Final Document of the Abuja meeting.

12. A number of factors continue to strengthen the widespread optimism in States of the zone about the bright prospects of the zone. Firstly, there is the abundant political will and determination of States on both sides of the South Atlantic zone to overcome centuries of colonial divide and construct mutually beneficial relations based on foundations of South-South cooperation. Secondly, the improved international political climate should encourage regional and global cooperation, the demise of apartheid and other forms of racial injustice that fuel tension, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, an enhanced respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations, the institution of democratic systems of Governments and a conducive atmosphere for the acquisition of requisite knowledge in science and technology to enable peoples of the States of the zone to realize their full potentials. Thirdly, the invaluable cooperation of the international community in general, and the United Nations in particular, since the establishment of the zone in 1986, has strengthened our confidence that the legitimate hopes and aspirations of States of the zone in resolution 41/11 are well placed.

13. Since the Abuja meeting of June 1990, a number of practical steps have been taken to advance the objectives of States of the zone. Regional and extra-regional initiatives have led to significant transformations in the political and security landscape of two States, Liberia and Angola, as well as in the Malvinas Islands. Developments in South Africa continue to hold the promise of an eventual evolution towards a non-racial, democratic society, when South Africa will be accepted as a State of the zone. The promotion of security and nuclear non-proliferation, to which the zone is irrevocably committed, has been given added impetus with the official commitments of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay to the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in Latin America, as well as the accession of South Africa and neighbouring front-line States in Africa to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. As a zone the members of which belong to other regional and international organizations, Nigeria proudly notes the strong support that the objectives of the zone received from the Heads of States and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at their summit meeting at Abuja in June 1991, from the Non-Aligned Ministerial Meeting at Accra in September and from the meeting of the Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth at Harare in October 1991.

14. As Coordinator, an important step was taken when the Nigerian Government convened at Lagos on 17 July 1991 a consultative meeting of the States of the zone, which deliberated on practical measures to implement the decisions reached at the Abuja meeting of the States of the zone in June 1990. The

meeting considered appropriate modalities in the key areas of intra-zonal security, trade and economic cooperation, environmental protection, scientific and technical cooperation, cultural and educational contacts and tourism. It also discussed questions of funding from global organizations, and technical cooperation among developing countries in various spheres of interest to the zone. Finally, the issue of the venue of the third high-level meeting of the States of the zone was agreed upon, as well as the need to involve businessmen, scientific experts, scholars and other professionals as part of the national delegations to the next meeting of the States of the zone in 1992 to broaden the level of participation and agenda. These agreements, together with the 1990 Final Document, constitute the blueprints for implementng the objectives of the zone as Coordinator till June 1992 when Nigeria's term as Coordinator will expire. The meeting was attended by the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Nigeria.

15. Similar interest and assistance continue to be received from the United Nations in pursuit of goals and objectives of the zone, as spelt out in the most recent General Assembly resolutions - 44/20 of 14 November 1989 and 45/36 of 27 November 1990. For example, two important seminars, jointly sponsored by UNDP and the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations, concerning the maritime law of the zone have been organized. The first was held at Brazzaville frm 12 to 15 June 1990 and was devoted to the review of the development and implementation of the legal regime established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as it affects the zone, and the second was held at Montevideo from 3 to 6 April 1991. These seminars have resulted in the identification of priority areas and specific agreements reached on various maritime profiles; the harmonization of relevant national legislation, policy and planning; development of ocean resources, marine science and technology; sharing of information; development of skills and capabilities; and measures concerning the protection and preservation of the marine environment of the zone. We look forward to many such well-focused seminars supported by UNDP and the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as broader multilateral cooperation on other issues of interest to the zone in 1992.

16. In our increasingly interdependent world, in which accommodation is replacing competition, States of the zone have great hopes that the peace dividend will result in the release of resources for improvement in the living standards of all peoples, including especially the peoples of States of the zone. An enduring new world order to which all nations look forward with expectation will only emerge if due recognition is given to the integral linkage between disarmament, security and development in every part of the world. This should translate into a reformed international trading and financial system, increased market access for the products of the developing countries, enhanced financial flows, access of scientific and technological expertise and urgent resolution of the debt burden of States of the zone.

17. In the years ahead, States of the zone will therefore be confronted with challenges of strengthening cooperation and development among themselves. Nigeria believes that by reason of the multifaceted contacts among the States,

the zone occupies a unique place in meeting these challenges. Nigeria's role as Coordinator has reinforced the confidence in the future of the zone as a great catalyst for cooperation and development in the South Atlantic region.